

PROBABLY no former report of the U. S. Commissioner of Agriculture has contained such a hopeful outlook for applied botany as that for 1886. Commissioner Colman deserves the credit of having brought this phase of agriculture into prominence as a subject of economic importance meriting development. His well chosen words in the report regarding the study of forage plants, the parasitic diseases of plants, and the biology of forest trees, as prosecuted during the past year, and the need of more ample provision for their continuance, will meet with the most hearty approval of every botanist who is interested in seeing the results and the methods of science turned to the service of the cultivator.

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### OPEN LETTERS.

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#### Mr. C. G. Pringle.

On the twenty-seventh of November for a few hours I had the pleasure of the company of Mr. C. G. Pringle, of Charlotte, Vermont, who is on his way home from northern Mexico, where he has again spent the summer collecting plants. All who have seen his specimens know that he is a prince among collectors. He reports the season as unfavorable for his work, though he estimates that he has secured at least 1,000 species. Next year he anticipates going on to higher grounds in the same country. He thinks it is a rough, dangerous way to live, some of the time among people who would not hesitate to kill him merely for his clothes, still he is full of enthusiasm and likes his work. There is a perpetual fascination in finding new things as well as in meeting with old friends among his plants. Mr. Pringle appeared in good health and spirits. The time passed too quickly to hear all he had to tell of his journey and his acquaintance with botanists in various parts of America.

*Michigan Agricultural College.*

W. J. BEAL.

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#### Herbarium Case.

In the herbarium case which was constructed for the Ark. Ind. Univ., to facilitate getting genus covers out of the pigeon holes, a two inch auger hole was bored in the bottom of each apartment in the center and one-half inch from the front. By inserting two fingers beneath the shelf the contents of the pigeon hole above are readily raised, and by slipping the other hand in, easily removed. This plan works nicely and has the merit of not disfiguring the front of the shelves, as the holes can not be seen, also leaves all the space on the front for labeling if desired.

*Orono, Maine.*

F. L. HARVEY.

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#### Dr. Edward Palmer.

Dr. Edward Palmer has just returned from Guadalajara, Mexico, where he has made a large and valuable collection of plants, which he will proceed to distribute among his patrons as soon as possible. He has also collected seeds of economic plants which he believes will be of value for cultivation in the arid districts of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

*Washington, D. C.*

GEORGE VASEY.